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SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/24/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [EU](#) [IS](#) [NL](#)
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/UNGA: LIKELY ABSTENTION ON ANTI-ISRAEL
RESOLUTIONS

REF: A. SECSTATE 123081
[1](#)B. PARIS 2141

Classified By: Political & Economic Affairs Counselor Andrew C. Mann for reasons 1.5(b,d)

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Dutch will likely follow the EU position and abstain on the anti-Israel resolutions at the UN General Assembly. The Dutch noted their strong relations with Israel, and urged active U.S. engagement on the Middle East Peace Process. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On November 21, poloff delivered reftel points to MFA contacts David Zeverijn, senior policy adviser in the Middle East department, Marc Verschuur, Acting Director for Political and Legal Affairs in the UN and IFIs Department, and Meline Arakelian, policy adviser for human rights. In a follow-up discussion, Zeverijn stated the Dutch would likely follow the EU position and abstain. The MFA has instructed the Dutch delegation in New York to work for "evenhandedness" and to avoid inflammatory language in resolutions on Israel. In addition, the Dutch agree the number of Israel resolutions should be reduced. These priorities will be balanced with Dutch support for solidarity with the EU.

[1](#)3. (C) More generally, Zeverijn has noted less diplomatic activity on the part of Israel, both in New York and in the Hague. Zeverijn suggests this reflects Israeli understanding that they have Dutch support, and also to a decision in New York to "pick their battles." Verschuur suggested the Israel resolutions were now "almost a ritual." On the other hand, Zeverijn thought this year's resolutions were "somewhat softer," reflecting the influence of the Palestinians rather than other Arabs. For future UNGAs, Zeverijn and Verschuur expected the same results. "We're spectators not actors." A peace agreement or a stronger Palestine might help resolve the issue.

[1](#)4. (C) Regarding Dutch-Israeli relations, Zeverijn noted that during recent bilateral consultations, FM Livni had given the Dutch delegation a letter for FM Verhagen, expressing her appreciation for the strong Dutch support at the Human Rights Council and at the UN. Arakelian noted that the Dutch had helped defeat UNGA amendments regarding "the occupation" proposed by the Organization for the Islamic Conference, most recently during consideration of the extrajudicial killings resolution on November 24.

[1](#)5. (C) Asked about the role of Washington in the months ahead, Zeverijn urged "rapid engagement on the ground" by in the incoming U.S. administration, "to avoid a repeat of eight years ago." Engagement might included action by the new Secretary of State or by a new Special Envoy for the Middle East. The West will also need to prepare for the new Israeli government.
CULBERTSON